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AN IRIDESCENT DREAM

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PAPER READ BY H. B. HAWLEY, PRESIDENT  
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AT THE  
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They tell us that World Peace is an Iridescent Dream "It can't be done." The Prophet-poet of the "Insurantee Critic" has furnished the text for this paper:

The world upon its axis spun,  
'Cause someone said, "It can't be done."  
That settled it. Eternal Night  
And Chaos gleamed in Heaven's light.  
At once the lion and the worm  
Sprang from the teaming earth enorm,  
And Adam woke in Eden's glade  
To find a wife there, ready made.

You should have seen an engine run,  
When someone said, "It can't be done."  
"It can't be done," was what they cried  
When Fulton offered them a ride.  
"It can't be done," the highbrows said,  
And lo! the Wrights flew overhead.  
They said it, and Marconi sent  
A wireless thru the firmament.

With that taunt ringing in his ear  
Has man encompassed this old sphere.  
Since Earth's remote and dismal dawn,  
These magic words have spurred men on—  
"It can't be done."

This globe is inhabited by a large number of amiable, well-intentioned, "It-can't-be-done" people. Mankind is known to be more or less savage. Wars have existed since the dawn of creation and it is natural to conclude that nations must continually prepare for war. The result of war is calamity. The object of insurance is amelioration. The two are unalterably antagonistic. As prevention is always better than cure, so is it the part of wisdom to use our ounce of prevention rather than pour out millions for cures. I deem it, therefore, opportune on this occasion to discuss that great menace to business, to industry, to prosperity and to the human race—*war—the black plague of civilization inherited from the past.*

When you visit the old Habanas Fortress across from Havana, the guide takes you up through a winding, peaceful valley to a great ledge of rocks and points out the place where the brutal Weyler used to stand Cuban prisoners up to be shot. He points out the holes in the rocks and the spent bullets on the ground. All of which are the fruitage of military preparedness, the concomitant of brute force.

Colonel Roosevelt is quoted as having recently said that he is naturally a very domestic man but that he and his four sons are ready to lead in a proposed military organization. Is it with any thought of actual defense or of doing police duty? Is he not, as a matter of fact, moved by that primary fighting instinct within?

The Rev. Frank Crane, writing to the "Outlook," said: "No man's creed is of any value except he be willing to die for it. I am willing. In case we drift into war with some other nation, I shall gladly go out,

stand against the wall, and be shot as a coward and traitor for refusing to kill citizens of another geographical territory, for I shall then be dying for a high principle I believe in, instead of for the unspeakable Hell of war which I do not believe in. \* \* \* Hating with all my heart the Jingo appeals to national egotism and race prejudice, striving to love my Mexican or Chinese neighbor as myself, believing that a Christly, gentlemanly attitude is as possible for my country as for myself, and being convinced that, had the United States spent one-half the energy in promoting a federation of the world, a league of peace, or some other form of world government that it spent in military preparedness, it could not have fallen into war, I would lay down my life as cheerfully as ever any martyr in the Roman Arena. If this be cowardice, let the militarists make the most of it." Here we have both sides of the question by two extremists.

It should also be noted that all over the world the vast majority of the people who profess Christianity are militarists, in the face of the fact that if Christ ever taught anything he taught the doctrine of non-resistance, as did his late Apostle Tolstoy. With most people there seems to be no middle ground, no way by which it "can be done." Even some of the Patriotic Societies of this country, with little or no world vision, are preaching doctrines that ought to have been forgotten a hundred years ago. They are as dangerous and more pernicious than the doctrine of the Bloody Shirt which political radicals waved over our country for so many years.

To my compatriots I would commend the spirit of Lowell:

"Where is the true man's fatherland?  
Is it where he by chance is born?  
Doth not the yearning spirit scorn  
In such scant borders to be spanned?  
Oh, yes! his fatherland must be  
As the blue heaven, wide and free."

"Where'er a single slave doth pine,  
Where'er one man may help another—  
Thank God for such a hirthright, brother—  
That spot of earth is thine and mine!  
There is the true man's hirthplace grand,  
His is a world-wide fatherland!"

When in 1913 I stood in the Coliseum of Rome on the very spot where Christians were used as breakfast food for lions, I could but think of how in later days other Christians got even with their heathen neighbors by similar tortures, and now nearly twenty centuries later, they are fighting each other in the same spirit and with as little reason as the Romans fed Christians to the lions. War among nations is simply an attempt to settle questions by torture and murder. In other words, a duel between nations that will not go to court.

The cause of the great European conflict now going on has been a puzzle and will be a subject of controversy for years to come, and yet the average Jingo's remedy of "preparation" is a sufficient cause to bring on all kinds of wars. A Chinese student, writing for a Shanghai paper, has perhaps given the best reason for the present war, as follows:

"Now there is a great battle in Europe. This began because the Prince of Austria went to Servia with his wife. One man of Servia killed him,

Austria was angry and write Serbia. Germany wrote a letter to Austria, 'I will help you.' Russia write a letter to Serbia, 'I will help you.' France did not want to fight, but they got ready their soldiers. Germany write a letter to France, 'You don't get ready, or I will fight you in nine hours.' Germany to fight them passed Belgium. Belgium say, 'I am a country; I am NOT a road.' And Belgium write a letter to England about Germany, to help them. So England helped Belgium." And there you have it.

In these days when the whole world is disgusted with war, it is a common saying that we are little advanced beyond the Hottentots and Red Indians. We do not like to admit this but it is being proved by thousands of illustrations. It is proved by the attitude of **some of our American jingoes**, by the writings of brilliant magazine editors and lesser lights all along down the line. "Blind leaders of the blind," they are now trying to let slip the dogs of war even in this country.

The absurdity of this program is most strikingly shown in the words of that great peace advocate, Dr. David Starr Jordan. "There is something primitive, crude and unprogressive in the spectacle of a civilized nation, composed of millions of clever people, trusting for its defense to forts and ships. With all the resources of business, of science, of thought, to depend on force today is a lazy, even cowardly, shirking of the higher possibilities of national strength. To be surrounded by 'gun men' holding the drop on all commercial rivals is a sorry conception of a nation's greatness. This attitude

has been as destructive to England's own peace of mind as it has been menacing to the world's welfare. For our republic to follow an example like this would be an ignominious surrender of democracy to medievalism."

In my city they have passed an ordinance that all dogs shall wear muzzles, on account of a recent mad dog scare. And now milady in the gray limousine, with dress and poodle to match, must put a horrid muzzle over his blessed little nose for fear it will break away, jump through the glass window and eat up the traffic policeman. Can you not think of some people more or less afflicted with rabies, in much greater need of muzzles? In times of peace make muzzles for the dogs of war.

We are in danger that "War Neurosis" shall become epidemic in this country like the St. Vitus' Dance and Flagellation in the middle ages. Just as the Dervishes in the far East repeat over and over again the same prayers and go through the same gymnastic motions, until they finally fall prostrate, foaming at the mouth, so men have been in Europe repeating for months the same patriotic litanies, the same baseless contentions, and going through the same gymnastics to prove that they, like the Hebrews of old, are God's chosen people. It is easy to hypnotize one's self or a nation by appealing to and stirring up the instincts of the brute within man.

I received a word from Colonel Theodore Roosevelt the other day. It did not come to my address but it came to me as delegate at large of the Iowa Society Sons of the American Revolution, at the National Society Meeting at Portland, Oregon. In



substance he said: "There were no mollyeoddles in 1776. I hope there are no mollyeoddles among you." On account of the wish to attend this Insurance Convention and the Insurance Congress in San Francisco in October, I was unable to be present when my compatriots were addressed. At this late date, however, it is my desire to call attention to the fact that there were quite a few mollyeoddles in those days. At that time they called them Tories. Many of these lived in the colony of New York, especially around New York City, and some of those names sound strangely like the ancestors of this man with an over abundance of physical courage, dominating a strong personality, which he should direct toward the moral eowards, who are the greatest menace to any country.

It, therefore, stirs my blood to hear such an appeal from such a source. Incidentally I would call his attention to the fact that the moral heroes of the past fifty years in our country were chiefly of New England and Scotch-Irish blood which, flowing untrammelled on our Western prairies, has furnished the moral stamina and the men who "blazed the trail" which our Colonel afterwards attempted to appropriate as a camping ground for his new party. Be it forever remembered that, while this man, who is now calling names, was still diekering with Platte, Barnes & Co., it was our Western men who led the hosts of reform when it took great moral courage, and

"Ere her cause brought fame and profit,  
And 'twas prosperous to be just."

yond the ordinary humdrum of our daily lives.

“Peace is the span between old conditions and those that are to be—between the man-savage and the Christ-man. There shall evolve a type free from the spirit of greed and love of gold, free from malice and injustice. It shall come from the soil of the middle class, and radiate a pure white light that shall draw all souls into it by the power of its magnetic beauty. No dogmas or creeds shall lie back of it; the bond of brotherly love alone shall hold it together.”

“A dream of a far-away day you call this? No, my friends, it is near, it is *our awakening*. Because our ancestors have lain in the deep sleep of intoxicated senses, fed for centuries on the wine of militarism, think you that this is to go on forever? No, the shock of the Twentieth Century will open eyes that have never seen before. As they behold the present day horrors, with loathing akin to madness, it will rouse their souls to new life, to something before incomprehensible. Terrible is the upheaval of earthquakes, but they raise the stubborn soil. 'Tis the tremendous conflagrations that make men realize the power of fire. After these come greater protection for every one. When the *need* is fully realized action comes.”

“So shall it be when the horrors of modern warfare shall stand out before the eyes of the world and all men and all nations look down into the caldron of destruction that is filled with earth's heroes. Grouped about it will stand the bent forms of young men and young women, broken under the burdens they must carry throughout their brief

lives, and then hand down to their own sons and daughters. Think you they will not *awake*? In common sympathy and pity they will reach out their hands to those nearest them, regardless of the place in which they *may have been born* until the world shall be encircled in the clasp of tenderness and understanding. Love will awake and unfurl the banner of Peace."

"What so close to love as pity? 'Tis the step just before it—the one that leads to the open door of the Great Temple. Within this Temple I see garlands of rarest flowers. From every land has come its choicest blossoms. Each nation has endeavored to outdo the others in what it can *give*. These garlands are all linked together and on each link I see the words: 'Peace and love to all mankind.' "

My friends, with this vision and in this spirit, it can—it will be done. The practical question is, shall we help to hasten the day?





